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SUBJECT Change in Officers and Policy of the
Armenian Relief Society, Shanghai

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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

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1. In September 1948, G. A. Kirlyan, president of the Armenian Relief Society (commonly known as the Armenian Club), and the members of the committee over which he presided, resigned. Nationalistic and somewhat conservative, they had been the targets of criticism by the club members and had decided to resign as a group in order to give the younger members an opportunity to run things.

2. On 19 September a meeting of the Armenian Relief Society was called to elect a new president and committee. 30 of the 157 members of the club were present. The meeting was opened by Franz Chakalyan, but at the insistence of several members, Artemy Arcadich Yagubiantz (also known as Yagubov), a Soviet citizen, presided over the election. The following officers were elected*:

President

Avsk Babayantz, stateless Armenian broker. He is a weak character, and a friend of Yagubiantz.

Vice-president

Paul Chakalyan, stateless Armenian, formerly a partner in Chakalyan Brothers' French Bakery. He is a weak character and far from bright.

Secretary

George Kichigian, nationality unknown but believed to be Iranian or stateless Armenian. He is a friend of Yagubiantz and tends to be pro-Soviet.

In charge of property

Levon Ovanessian, Iranian, a civilian employee of the United States Navy. He is very pro-Soviet and a friend of Yagubiantz.

Treasurer

Franz Chakalyan, stateless Armenian, formerly a partner in Chakalyan Brothers' French Bakery. He is opposed to the Soviets and to Yagubiantz in particular.

In charge of bar

Lagerdich, Iranian, employed by the United States Navy as a carpenter. He is Armenian nationalist in his convictions, but friendly to Levon Ovanessian and others.

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NO CHANGE in class.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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Revisory or
Auditing Committee

Norses Karapetian, nationality unknown but believed to be Iranian. He has no fixed occupation other than black market operations. He associates with Nikita Adoyan and Kazakov, both Soviet citizens, and is pro-Soviet.

Haik Ogandganian, an elderly retired sausage-maker. He is an Iranian citizen, but Armenian nationalist in sentiment, with pro-Soviet leanings.

3. On 23 September 1948, Lena Yagubiantz Chakalyan and Margaret Ovanessian called a meeting of the women members of the Armenian Relief Society to elect a women's committee. 20 women attended, and the following persons were elected:

President

Evelyn Gregory, British subject of Armenian origin, formerly employed by the United States Army in Nanking and now working as a typist for the California Texas Oil Company. She is separated from her Armenian husband, a British citizen now in the United States. She has leftist leanings.

Secretary

Margaret Ovanessian, Iranian citizen, wife of Levon Ovanessian. She is very pro-Soviet and a close friend of the Yagubiantz family.

Treasurer

Varduiny Kichigian, Iranian or stateless Armenian wife of George Kichigian. She is pro-Soviet and a friend of Lena Yagubiantz Chakalyan.

Candidates (sic)

Rosie Chakalyan Onanov, stateless Armenian widow. She is a member of the Shanghai Jewish Club, and anti-Soviet, but passive with regard to politics in general.

Nadia Sergoyan, stateless Armenian wife of George Sergoyan, manager of the Chekiang Theatre. She is a weak character and under the influence of Lena Yagubiantz Chakalyan, who visits her regularly.

Elizabeth Greber, stateless Armenian wife of Michael Greber, a guest-member of the club. She is outspokenly pro-Armenian and anti-Soviet.

4. Certain of the new leaders in the club were proposing to make the club more interesting and, for financial reasons, to admit as honorary members persons of other nationalities.**

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* ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Comment. Though the ballot was secret, the friends of Yagubiantz did a great deal of electioneering while the votes were being prepared.

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** ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Comment. Since the language of the Armenian Relief Society is Russian, the new honorary members can come only from the Soviet friends of the present members.

*** Washington Comment. A list of 98 Armenian residents of Shanghai, with their occupations and nationalities, is available for loan, if requested.

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